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TAGS: [PRL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MORS](#) [UNSC](#) [EG](#) [SU](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: A/S WELCH DISCUSSES LEBANON, DARFUR WITH EGYPT'S
FOREIGN MINISTER

Classified by DCM Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: A/S Welch met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit in Cairo on November 14. Aboul Gheit confirmed he will go to Addis Ababa November 16 to attend the UN/AU meeting. He reported that the Sudanese are willing to accept the proposed first and second packages of UN support for the AU, but not the third. They will accept non-African troops providing "technical support" (ie., logistics or communications) but not combat forces. He expects "good progress" but no major breakthroughs in this week's meeting. On Lebanon, Aboul Gheit said that Egypt will talk to Syria about the situation, which Egypt considers "very sensitive." He also questioned the Maronite commander of Beirut's commitment to "defending Lebanese stability." Aboul Gheit underlined the usefulness of continuing exchanges on Darfur, and welcomed any ideas or discussion on options in Lebanon.
END SUMMARY.

Darfur

¶2. (C) Visiting A/S Welch met with Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs Aboul Gheit on November 14 in Cairo. According to Aboul Gheit, the Sudanese, working with the African Union's (AU) Peace and Security Commission (PSC) in Addis Ababa and UN Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Hedi Annabi, have agreed on the first and second packages of UN support for the African Union forces, but cannot agree to the third part. The Sudanese will not accept non-African troops to use in "bulk" but non-African technical units, ie., communications, transportation, and logistics, were acceptable. When asked about the possibility of NATO member state troops, Aboul Gheit warned against even mentioning it, and cited Malaysian communications units as more acceptable to Sudan.

¶3. (C) Aboul Gheit said Annabi and Sudanese foreign minister Lam Akol would attend a November 16 meeting of the AU's PSC in Addis, and he confirmed he would also be going. Aboul Gheit believes the Sudanese are "eager" to be accommodating and he expects "good progress" but no major breakthrough. In response to a question about bringing Darfur non-signatories into peace negotiations, Aboul Gheit said the Sudanese government is eager to widen the discussions, and ready to pay significant compensation to Darfur tribes. He said he talked to his French counterpart yesterday about allowing Khalil Ibrahim to travel from Paris to Cairo for talks on DPA adherence.

¶4. (C) In that same conversation, Aboul Gheit reported that the French Foreign Minister had earlier that day raised the idea of UN forces in Chad and the Central African Republic, on both sides of the border. The Sudanese "said no" to forces on the Sudanese side but said observers would be acceptable. Aboul Gheit commented that observers would be "sitting ducks" without a peace agreement.

15. (C) Aboul Gheit said the Sudanese Charge in DC asked Egypt to encourage Special Envoy Andrew Natsios stop in Khartoum en route to Addis this week. Aboul Gheit said he would be happy to speak to Special Envoy Natsios on Wednesday, November 15 between 9-10 a.m. DC time. A/S Welch asked if Aboul Gheit is satisfied with communications with the US on this issue. Aboul Gheit responded that "we are giving you lots and getting lots of answers," and compared exchanges with the US favorably to those with the UK.

Lebanon

16. (C) A/S Welch asked for Aboul Gheit's views on Lebanon. He responded that the situation is "very sensitive," on a "hazardous course," and that "if one person is killed it will explode." The minister said Egypt will communicate its concerns to Syria. He also commented that the "readiness" of the Maronite commander of Lebanese armed forces in Beirut needs to be "encouraged to defend Lebanese stability," as Egypt detects hesitation on his part. He also suggested that Walid Jumblatt needs to be "quieted."

17. (C) In response, A/S Welch said the US is concerned about outside parties trying to exploit the situation. Hezbollah, he said, wants to divert attention away from itself to cover its mistakes, and its failure to come through on reconstruction. He noted that Michel Aoun has told Ambassador Feltman that he does not agree with Hezbollah's street demonstration tactics. Aboul Gheit said the March 14 figures have proven to be "tough" and have not been "shaken" by what is happening. He asked the US stay in close touch with Egypt on developments, and welcomed any ideas or reflections on a possible way forward.
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